

UNIVERSIDAD
DE SALAMANCA

CAMPUS OF INTERNATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Trans-Nations in American Literature and Culture

3 creds.

1st semester

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Aims and Objectives

What is a border? What does it communicate and separate and? This course intends to answer such questions at the same time that delves into the concept of the border/frontier and its importance in the American imaginary. From a variety of critical approaches, this course examines the dynamics of the border and border encounters and their linguistic, identitary, philosophical, ideological and cultural consequences. The course dissects the concept of the boundary at the same time that it examines the importance of geopolitical lines in the definition of a country and a nation. As it focuses on literary and cultural manifestations, with the analysis of movies such as *The Terminal*, *The Visitor*, *Frozen River* o *Babel*, the course offers a critical and interdisciplinary dialogue between culture and the world we live in.

You can see a power point presentation of this course on
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/course/id650833613?l=es>

- When students have successfully completed this course, they will be able to:
- make use of critical terms such as hybridization, creolization, transculturation, acculturation, translation, intercultural mediation, conflict, negotiation
 - be familiar with the notions of *mestizaje* and cultural hyphenation (from mono to multiple hyphenation)
 - understand the traditional way societies conceptualize and respond to the outside world
 - explore and illustrate the complexity of the border or frontier as a double mechanism
 - trace the concept of the border in a variety of literary works and cultural artifacts
 - apply abstract terms and concepts to their everyday reality
 - identify a “border situation” both in a variety of literary reflections and in everyday life
 - generate ideas for analyzing contemporary society

- internalize the concepts of mediation or separation
- approach and critically analyze culture(s) in translational terms
- understand the role of translation in the construction of culture(s) and in the formation of identities
- identify the potentialities and limitations of translation as a mechanism and/or paradigm of intercultural mediation
- engage in current debates on ethics in relation to cultural contact and (inter)cultural dynamics

Course Program

1-General introduction to the Border.

What is it? What is it good for? Has it always been here? How does it become a metaphor for cultural encounters or trans-nations? What are the effects of the border?

Readings:

From Zamora Linmark's *Rolling the R'S*: Metaphors of cultural encounter
 from Anzaldúa's *Borderlands*; Gómez Peña "The Border Is": an anatomy of the border
 Crosthwaite, L. Humberto: "Instrucciones para cruzar la frontera": What does the border do to language?

2-Border in literature. The Dynamics of the border

Readings:

Robert Frost's "Mending Wall": The wall that communicates and separates
 F. Kafka "The Great Wall of China": The impossible border
 J.L. Borges: "The Wall and the Books": The wall in space and the wall in time

3- The Border in US literature: a perspectival vision.

Readings:

Helena Viramontes's "The Cariboo Café": the urban border
 Thomas King, "Borders": the nation and the nation-state
 Joyce Carol Oates, "Customs"
 Junot Díaz, "Aguantando": lines in the water
 Morales, *The Rag Doll Plagues*: Trans-realities and trans-nations in the New World

4- Further revisions of the Border

The Strait of Gibraltar and the Río Grande.
 The European Border

Methodology

Class meetings will consist of lectures, group discussions, and oral presentations. The course will put strong emphasis not only on oral discussions, but also on activities designed to stimulate the students' writing skills. Since regularly we have an international mix of students in the course, there will be ample opportunity for participants to share their own ideas and experiences of border encounters and the crossing of lines.

Assessment

A selection of texts (including but not limited to those indicated above) will be specified at the beginning of the course for class discussion on given dates. Students are required to read each assigned text before class and to come prepared to discuss it. In addition, students will have to prepare an oral presentation.

The students will be evaluated on a combination of their participation in class, an oral presentation and a final written essay. There will be a final paper or project.

Participation and oral presentation: 30 %

Written Assignments: 30%

Final project 40%

Bibliography and Resources

Benito, Jesús, and Ana M^a Manzanás, 2003, *Intercultural Mediations: Hybridity and Mimesis in American Literature*, Berlin: Lit Verlag.

Anzaldúa, Gloria, 1987. *Borderlands/ La Frontera*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Press, 1987.

Arteaga, A. , 1997. *Chicano Poetics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Benito, Jesús, and Ana M^a Manzanás, 2003. *Intercultural Mediations: Hybridity and Mimesis in American Literature*. Berlin: Lit Verlag.

Castillo, D. and R. Tabuenca, 2002. *Border Women*. Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press.

Fox, C. , 1999. *The Fence and The River*. Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Juffer, Jane, ed., 2006 *The Last Frontier: The Contemporary Configuration of the U.S.-Mexico Border*. The South Atlantic Quarterly 105: 4

Manzanás, Ana M^a, ed. 2007. *Border Transits*. Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi.

Manzanás, Ana M^a and Jesús Benito, 2011. *Cities, Borders and Spaces in American Literature and Film*. New York: Routledge.

Price, Patricia, 2004. *Dry Place*. Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press.

Saldívar, J.D., 1997. *Border Matters*. University of California Press.

Websites

1- "Border links" offers the most comprehensive list of online resources about the border
http://americas.irc-online.org/borderlines/links_body.html

2- “United States-Mexico Borderlands/Frontera” offers information on different aspects of the border such as its regions, its peoples and its history
<http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/migrations/bord/intro.html>
